1594.

A

PLEASANT HISTORY

OF THE

Life and Death

OF

WILL SUMMERS:

HOW HE CAME FIRST TO BE KNOWN AT COURT, AND BY WHAT MEANS HE GOT TO BE

KING HENRY THE EIGHTH'S JESTER;

WITH THE

ENTERTAINMENT THAT HIS COUSIN PATCH, CARDINAL WOOLSEY'S FOOL, GAVE HIM AT HIS LORD'S HOUSE;

AND

HOW THE HOGSHEADS OF GOLD WERE KNOWN BY HIS MEANS.

London: Printed for T. Vere and J. Wright, 1676.

REPRINTED AND SOLD BY

JAMES CAULFIELD, BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER, NO. 6, CLARE COURT, DRURY LANE.

1794.

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WILL SUMMERS was ſome time a ſervant in the family of Richard Farmor, eſq. of Eſton Neſton, in Northamptonſhire, anceſtor to the earl of Pomfret. This gentleman was found guilty of a *præmunire* in the reign of Henry VIII. for ſending eight pence, and a couple of ſhirts, to a prieſt, convicted of denying the king's ſupremacy, who was then a priſoner in the gaol at Buckingham. The rapacious monarch ſeized whatever he was poſſeſſed of, and reduced him to a ſtate of miſerable dependance. Will Summers, touched with compaſſion for his unhappy maſter, is ſaid to have dropped ſome expreſſions in his laſt illneſs, which reached the conſcience of that mercileſs prince, and to have cauſed the remains of his eſtate, which had been much diſmembered, to be reſtored to him.

Granger's Biographical Hiſtory of England, vol. I. page 117.

IN Mr. Pearſon's Collection of rare and curious Books ſold in 1788, by Meſſrs. Egerton, Mr. Dodd, of Drury Lane Theatre, bought a very ſcarce Play for ſixteen Shillings, entitled, Summers' Laſt Will and Teſtament, by T. Naſh.

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THE

LIFE

OF

WILL SUMMERS.

THE proverb tells us, *Stultorum plena ſunt omnis*; all places are full of fools. There is Solomon's fool, he that deſpiſeth wiſdom and knowledge: there is St. Gregory's fool, who is buſy in other men's matters, and careleſs and negligent of his own: there is Democritus his fool, who only doteth upon things abſent, and what is preſent deſpiſeth, though much more commodious and beneficial than things paſt. Socrates hath his rich fool, whom he calleth *a golden ſlave:* Cicero's fool, who can neither endure things preſent, nor prevent what is to come: there is Dyoniſius his fool, who beareth himſelf arrogantly to the humble, and ſubmiſſively to the proud: there is Pachimerus his fool, who in ſerious things ſports, and in

in trifles and toys is ſerious. Ariſtotle's fool, who hath no ſenſe to diſtinguiſh good from bad. There is Crates his fool, who in proſperity is drunk, in adverſity mad. There is Seneca's fool, who always is but beginning to live, and feeds his fancies with new hopes even in the extremity of his age. There is Procopius his fool, that conſidereth not in the beginning what the end may be, but repenteth himſelf in the midſt: and ſo of the reſt.

Folly is the poverty of the mind, and amongſt fools, he is held to be the greateſt fool that knoweth little, and would ſeem to underſtand much. A fair and beautiful perſon, ſaith Diogenes, that is defective in his ſenſes, is like a gorgeous houſe inhabited with a bad tenant. The fool wanteth much, and were he poſſeſt of all things, yet did he not know how to uſe any of them; for the more rich a fool is, the more fooliſh he is. A ſimple or ignorant perſon may be known by three things: he cannot rule himſelf, becauſe he lacketh reaſon; he cannot reſiſt his paſſions, becauſe he wanteth wit, neither can he act that which he would do, becauſe he is in bondage to folly; for where there is no capacity or apprehenſion, all perſuaſion or inſtruction is in vain. It is better to be unborn, than unknowing, for want of underſtanding is the root of all misfortune; neither is ignorance ever truly known to be ignorance, till it be matched

matched with knowledge. *Unicum eſt bonum ſcientia, & malum unicum eſt ignorantia:* that is, the only good is knowledge, and the only evil is ignorance. In adverſity it is a bleſſing, in proſperity a ſcorn: it hath the boldeſt face, and cowardlieſt expreſſion, and is no better than the mere fancy of the mind: but as veſſels are known by their ſound whether they be whole or broken, ſo men are found by their ſpeech and behaviour, whether they be wiſe or fooliſh: and as the wiſdom of wiſe men continually augmenteth, ſo the ſtupidity of the fooliſh evermore encreaſeth.

Some be fools by nature, ſuch as we call mere naturals, or ideots: others be cunning and crafty fools, who when they cannot thrive by their wiſdom, ſeek to live by their folly: and ſuch a one, it may be imagined, was this Will Summers, of whom is our preſent argument: for as ſome things proceeding from him favoured of a mere brainleſs ſtupidity: ſo other things again expreſſed in him, a wary and acute and ingenious capacity; ſo that he might be imagined to be a mixture of two metals, or a compound of fool and knave, in which word I no way tax his honeſty, but rather intend in it his crafty ſimplicity.

I ſhall not need to ſtand long to diſcourſe upon his birth, breeding, and parents; only I will deliver to you ſome pleaſant paſſages of his in the country before he came to be a courtier: he was of a low ſtature,

ſtature, of a pleaſant countenance, and of a nimble body and geſture, and had a good mother-wit in him, as the ſtory hereafter will ſhew.

Will Summers paſſing by chance where he heard a poor miller begging an alms of a baker, and deſired to give him ſomething for the alliance that was betwixt their two trades: Summers aſked the miller, how many farmers had been cuſtomers to his mill. Who anſwered him, ſeven or eight, and that he only ground all their corn: to whom he replied again: baker, it is pity to give this fellow any thing, for I find by him he is more fool than knave: for if there had been any wit in him at all, he would have undone all theſe farmers before himſelf would have been forced to go thus a begging.

When his mother went to burial, he following the hearſe, ſtretcht out his voice, and ſung as loud as he was able, for which his father reproving him, he made anſwer and ſaid, father, you are the greateſt fool of the two, for the prieſt and clerk will not ſing for her unleſs you hire them with money, and you ſee I am content to do it of free coſt.

Coming with a friend or companion of his into a victualling houſe, they called for eggs, which when they had eaten, and ſatisfied the hoſteſs, Will Summers made haſte to be gone, and his partner could not make him ſtay any longer by any means: but being

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being ſome diſtance from the houſe, his friend aſked him what was the reaſon he made ſuch ſpeed thence; marry, ſaith he, becauſe my hoſteſs ſhould not call me to queſtion for an after reckoning, for in one of my eggs there was a chicken, and I ſupt it off at one mouthful, and never paid for it.

In the way home it happened Will Summers, having his bundle at his back, and ſtraining himſelf with taking too large a ſtride, let fly a great crack from behind, which the other hearing, ſaid unto him, now out upon thee for a beaſtly fool, what haſt thou done? who anſwered him again, thou muſt needs excuſe me; and further I can aſſure thee, if my tail could have borrowed thy tongue to have made uſe of, it would have been talking long ago.

Upon a time being walking in the middle of ſummer, and the ſun ſhining very hot upon him inſomuch that he ſweat again, looking up to the elements, he ſaid, now if thou beeſt a God, ſun, take in thy beams, and keep them till next winter, and if you will afford me them then, I ſhall be much beholding unto thee.

Another time Will Summers and his horſe having croſſed a river in a ferry-boat, and being very fearful upon the water, he ſpake never a word till he had got ſafe over, and ſitting himſelf down on the farther ſhore, and fetching a great ſigh, he ſaid, now what

a blockiſh and ſenſeleſs fool am I, for if I had been drowned in the river, how miſerably would my father have beaten me.

Upon a time being in a place where a devoiſt gallant came in, whoſe only talk was of his Gentility, and from what a noble houſe he was deſcended, Will Summers ſeeing him ſo brave in words, and poor in habit, ſaid unto him, What a coil is here with talking of Gentry and Nobility? I do not think but if the truth were known, our Miller's horſe is the better Gentleman of the two; for you ſhall never ſee him go abroad without a man to wait upon him.

Another time a Miller having abuſed him, he told him, that he thought there was nothing that he could imagine was more valiant than the coller of a Miller's ſhirt: who aſking him what reaſon he had to think ſo? made preſent anſwer, Marry becauſe every morning it hath a Thief by the neck.

Upon a time, being very ſick and weak, by reaſon of a Fever that had long troubled him, a neighbour coming to give him ſome wholſome ghoſtly counſel, bad him be of good comfort, and told him, that if he were taken out of this vain tranſitory world, he ſhould be immediately taken up, and carried into Paradiſe, who anſwered him that he was glad of that with all his heart: for if the way to Paradiſe were any part of it up hill, he was never able to travel

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travel thither on foot, his legs were ſo weak and feeble.

On a time Will Summers wanting money, and having neither money nor credit, knew not what to do; at length bethinking with himſelf how to get ſome coin, it being Summer time, he goes into a hollow Tree, and there gets a great deal of the powder or duſt of the Tree, and laps it up in little Papers like to Tobacco, and rides unto a Town where he was not known: and it being a Market-day, opened a Box which he had before him, wherein were all theſe papers full of this powder, and there with a loud voice cries out, buy a Tormentor for Fleas, buy a Tormentor of Fleas: the people at that ſeaſon being much troubled with fleas, bought every one two penny worth, and aſked him how they ſhould uſe it: Thus ſaid he; ſtrew it on the ſheets before you go to bed, and I will warrant you it will torment and kill them all. So in a ſhort ſpace Will Summers had ſold all, and had ſtore of money, and went away merrily to his Father's houſe. So the next Market-day following, he wanting more money, went again with more of the ſame powder, and took money enough; and ſome of thoſe which had formerly bought the powder of him, told him that it did no good, but rather diſturbed them of their ſleep, nor did it kill the fleas: Then ſaid Will Summers, you did not as I told you; yes, indeed, we did ſtrow it in

the bed: Ey but, ſaid Will Summers, you ſhould have had a little ſtick in one hand, and with the other hand have caught them by the nap of the neck, and ſo have thruſt it down their throats, and that will ſo torment them, that they will never trouble you again. So they bought more of the ſame powder, and went home, and thanked him heartily, without any ſuſpicion of his knavery and deceit therein.

Above all things Will Summers could not endure the lye, and if any man told him that he ly'd, he would be ſure to ſtrike him with the next thing that came into his hand. It ſo happened, that he telling a Tale according to his faſhion, one that ſtood by and heard him, ſaid unto him. Nay that (William) I hold to be an errant lye, at which he growing to a pelting chafe, ſnatcht up a good cudgel, and came towards him, holding it over his head, and aſked him why he gave him the lye? the other knowing his ſuddenneſs, and that he was but a word and blow, denyed his words, and ſaid, he ſaid no ſuch thing; Ey but ſaid he, thou didſt; but ſaid the other, I did not: he ſtill urg'd it, and the other denyed it ſo long, that at length he brake out and ſaid, thou lyeſt in thy throat, and in thy guts, to ſay that I offered to give thee the lye; at which words he flung away his cudgel, and ſaid, that word hath given me ſatisfaction: It was well that thou didſt not ſay I ly'd, for if thou hadſt, I would not have left

beating

beating thee whilſt thou hadſt had one whole bone in thy ſkin.

To one that had two children at one birth, Will Summers came and told him, that he had the moſt honeſt and faithfulleſt wife of any man that was in the whole Pariſh, he demanding wherein? wherein, ſaith he? why ſhe hath brought thee two children at once, and hath given them both unto thee; when, if ſhe had not been juſt and honeſt, ſhe might have conceal'd one of them, and kept it to her ſelf.

His Father upon a time ſent him unto the Horſe-market with a Nag to ſell, now when he came to the place where the Chapmen reſorted, and every one rid his horſe to and fro, to make them the more credible, he tyed his horſe in a corner, and ſat him down cloſe by him: At length one ſpying the Nag, and ſeeing him to be a very likely beaſt, and thinking him to be the ſeller, becauſe he ſat ſo near him, he aſked him what buſineſs he had there? who anſwered, I cannot tell; he aſked him whoſe horſe that was? he anſwered, his that would buy him: ſaid the other, thou canſt not ſell him by ſitting here; then (anſwered he) I will keep him, and carry him away: he aſked him if he were ſound of wind and limb; ſure if he were, replyed he again, I think my father is not ſuch a fool as to part with him. The Chapman perceiving his ſimplicity, imagined it to

be

be free from all deceit and cunning, bargained for him, and bought him.

He being eaſing his body, and cloſe at his buſineſs, one that knew him paſſing by, call'd to him, and ſaid aloud; Well ſaid Will, I ſee that thou art doing that which no man can do for thee: who anſwered, I do not deſire it, for I am old enough to do it for my ſelf: The other replyed, Indeed it is that which no body can be without; to whom (having made an end of what he was doing, and riſing withal) he ſaid, Nay that is not ſo, for I can be without it now, and if you like it you may take it for your labour.

His Father ſending him into the Country upon ſome buſineſs, being benighted by the way, he light upon a Cottage, where by much intreaty he got ſhelter; but the houſe affording no ſpare Bed, he was forced to make ſhift and lye in an out-houſe where was a Hay-loft: Now the man having a Cow that had newly calved, had laid it there for warmth ſake, in which Will laid himſelf cloſe by it, not perceiving that any ſuch thing was there. In the night he had a terrible dream, for he thought he had a great ſwelling in his belly, which troubled him very ſore, and that in the end he was delivered of a Calf: Now at the break of day waking, and finding the young Calf ſo near him, preſently apprehended that

that his dream was true, and fearing leſt it would come to light, he preſently got up, and taking his ſuppoſed birth in his arms, caſt it into a ditch, and drowned it, running away homeward as faſt as his legs were able to carry him.

His Father not being well, ſent him with his Urine to have ſome counſel from the Doctor, who knocking at his door, and the Phyſician opening unto him, he preſented him the Urinal, who, as he took it from his hand, aſked him withal from whence he came? to whom he made anſwer, I hope your Worſhip is wiſe enough to find that in the water.

Being aſked by one, why a dog, when he made water ever lifted up his leg? he anſwered, For manner's ſake, and leſt he ſhould bepiſs his ſtockings.

Many and almoſt infinite were his Jeſts which paſt from him in the Country for ſtupid and ſimple, others witty and wiſe, inſomuch it could not be eaſily gheſt to which his conſtitution was moſt inclined; but always he abhorred all naſtineſs, keeping himſelf very handſome and cleanly, inſomuch that in the Country his fame ſpread as far as the Court, and came to the ear of the King, who ſent for him to ſee and talk with him.

Divers are the demeanours and diſpoſitions of thoſe which we call Fools and Ideots; ſome are of a ſullen and dogged nature, others of a merry and pleaſant

ſant humour: one in rainy weather will be full of ſport and laughter: if you aſk him why? he will tell you then, when the rain is over there will come fair weather, and rejoyce to think upon it: and when the rain is over, and fair weather comes, he will be ſad and drooping; demand the cauſe, that when the fair weather is over, the foul will come again. I have known another of ſuch a contrary ſpirit, that whatſoever you intreated him to do, he would be dogged and deny it; but that you warn him to forbear, that he would do, though he were ſure to be ſoundly diſciplin'd for his pains; but this Will Summers was of an eaſie nature, and tractable diſpoſition, who after he had found the faſhions of the Court, and tried the humour of the King, complied ſo well with both, that he gained not onely grace and favour from his Majeſty, but a general love from the Nobility; for he was no carry-tale, nor whiſperer, nor flattering inſinuater, to breed diſcord and diſſention, but an honeſt plain down-right, that would ſpeak home without halting, and tell the truth of purpoſe to ſhame the Devil; ſo that his plainneſs mixt with a kind of facetiouſneſs, and tartneſs with pleaſantneſs, made him very acceptable into the companies of all men.

I told you he was ſent for to the Court, and coming up to London with his Cloaths at his back, and

paſſing

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paſſing through one of the Inns of Court in the height of the Term, he obſerved a great company of Gentlemen in their Gowns, and demanded of one that was with him, of what Calling or profeſſion they were, who told him they were Lawyers: Lawyers, ſaith he? indeed for their ſakes I am ſorry for the whole City: Why? replyed the other; marry, ſaith he, becauſe we have but one Lawyer in the Shire where I live, and he hath undone the whole Country; now they having ſo many here, I am greatly afraid, that in ſhort ſpace they will undo the whole City.

Well, to the Court he was brought, and had admittance into the preſence of the King, but what conference they had together, is beyond me, in regard that I was not then preſent: and to diſcern the King the better, he put on a pair of Spectacles; and being aſked the reaſon, ſaid, He could ſee every common man with his eyes, but to ſee the King he would put them on. But ſome ſay, that he aſked him how many legs a Mutton had? who anſwered him two: again he aſked him, how he could make that good? he replyed, that he had heard in the Country, how a ſheep had four leggs, but being kill'd, and then call'd a Mutton, it had only two leggs, and two ſhoulders. He next demanded of him, (he being a fool) whether he were capable to

inherit any land? who anſwered him again, that he thought he might: The King demanded his reaſon? marry, ſaith he, my Father being a wiſe man begot me a fool; now why may not I (being a fool) beget a wiſe child to inherit my land, if I had any: with ſuch and the like queſtions the King made tryal of him, and preſently entertain'd him both into his grace and livery; and now who but Will Summers the King's fool? who had got ſuch an Intereſt in him by reaſon of his quick and facetious Jeſts, that he could have admittance into his Majeſties Chamber, and have his ear, when a great noble man, nay, a Privy Councellor could not be ſuffered to ſpeak with him: and further, if the King were angry, or diſpleaſed with any thing, if no man elſe durſt demand the cauſe of his diſcontent, then was Will Summers provided with one pleaſant conceit or another, to take off the edge of his diſpleaſure: but from the general, I come to ſome particulars of his Jeſts, or merry conceits.

The King upon a time riding upon his Progreſs with his Nobles, and the Cardinal Wolſey paſt by a place, where (it ſeemeth) he had a Miſtreſs, which Will Summers well knew, the King being diſpoſed to be merry, aſked him if he could rhime? Rhime my Liege ſaith he? that I can, for I have in me much more Rhime than Reaſon. Then replyed he again, look up towards the Turret, and anſwer to me'

me in rhime what I ſhall tell thee, and began thus:

Within yon Tower
There is a flower,
That hath my heart,

To whom Will Summers inſtantly reply'd,

Within this hour
She piſt full ſower,
And let a fart.

Which the King laughed at exceedingly: then the Cardinal muſt needs rhime with him, and thinking thereby to have daunted him for his bold anſwer to the King, began, Come William, what ſay you to this Rhime?

A rod in the School
And a whip for a fool,
Is always in ſeaſon.

Then anſwered Will Summers,

A Halter and a Rope,
For him that would be Pope
Againſt all right and reaſon.

Which the Cardinal hearing, bit his lip; for at that time there was ſome ſpeech that the Cardinal did aim at it. Theſe homely Jeſts might paſs in thoſe days, though the refinedneſs of theſe our times will neither admit ſuch courſeneſs of language, nor ſuch boldneſs with Princes.

Nay, in thoſe times, as they were bold in their language, ſo ofttimes they would not make it a thing ſqueamiſh, to be ſomewhat prophane: for the Proverb being then on foot, That there were three ſeveral Trades, that could never be free from Felony, namely, Weavers, Millers, and Taylors. The king aſked his fool what he thought of Millers? Of Millers ſaid he? I will tell your Majeſty; I hold them to be a kin to the Bleſſed Virgin: Your reaſon ſaith the king? marry anſwered he, I ſhall tell you; ſhe above all colours preferreth a white Veſture, as betokeneth purity, ſincerity, and chaſtity; and in that they alſo ſtrive to imitate her: for you ſhall never meet a Miller but in a white and mealy habit: next, as ſhe was before the birth a Virgin, in the birth a Virgin, and after the birth a Virgin: ſo a Miller is before his Mill a Thief, and in his Mill a Thief, and behind his Mill a Thief: but theſe words, though they be priviledged for fools, are not authentical for wiſe men.

It was a cuſtom in thoſe days that no man ſhould be

be admitted into the king's Guard, but ſuch as were tall ſtatur'd, well feather'd, ſtrong men, and valiant. Now it happened, that ſome places being then empty, to fill up the number divers Noblemen had prefer'd ſome of their ſervants, and preſented them unto the king; (Will Summers then ſtanding by) ſaith one of them, See my Liege, this man is no Coward, for he hath received this hurt in his face: And ſaid another, and this my man hath had ſuch and ſuch cuts in the leg: ſaid the third, and mine hath had ſo many dangerous wounds in the body, and withal cauſed them to ſhew their ſcars which were apparent; which the Prince obſerving, and as the Proverb goeth, King Henry lov'd a man, he was willing to receive him into the Band: but before he would entertain them, he aſked Will Summers what he thought of theſe ſtout and tall fellows? Who anſwered him again, that he thought them not fit for his ſervice: the king demanding his reaſon, marry ſaith he I ſee theſe men have indeed been hurt, and mangled, and have their mends in their own hands: but I would have thee to ſend out, and make inquiry for the men that gave them theſe wouuds: for in my mind, they of the two (if thou ſhouldſt ſtand in need of them) are the fitteſt for thy ſervice.

One aſking Will Summers why the beſt and richeſt Benefices were for the moſt part confer'd on the moſt

moſt unworthy and unlearned men? he made anſwer, Do not you obſerve daily, that upon the moſt weak and pooreſt Jades are laid the greateſt burdens, and upon the beſt and ſwifteſt horſes placed the youngeſt and lighteſt Gallants?

Upon a time paſſing by a very hard-favour'd Wench, he ſaid to one in his company: And is not that a very dainty fine creature? which the Laſs over-hearing, and knowing ſhe was flouted, made anſwer again. Thou mayſt walk far enough before thou ſhalt hear any one ſay ſo much by thee. Nay, reply'd he, that I need not, if any man be diſpoſed to tell as lewd a lye of me, as I did of thee.

Will Summers coming into a Chapel of the fryer Minors, he ſaw Saint Francis painted in a very fair Table, ſitting in the midſt of four grave and reverend Doctors; who preſently call'd to a fryer, and demanded of him what Saint Francis, being a lay man, and no Scholar at all, made in that place, diſputing amongſt the Doctors? the fryer replied unto him again, why I tell thee thou ignorant fellow, that this Saint Francis was the greateſt Doctor amongſt them all: who anſwered, My thinks that carrieth with it very ſmall appearance of truth, that the fryer Minors, (which is the leaſt fryer, or the fryers of the leſs Order) ſhould have the greateſt Scholar, or Doctor to be their Founder or Patron.

His

His cuſtom was (by the king's command) to keep a Catalogue or a Regiſter of all their names in or about the Court, who had committed any notorious folly, or ridiculous act worthy juſt taxation or laughter, and once in a quarter of a year to bring unto the king a particular, or liſt of their names: It ſo happened, that a Traveller and Stranger coming from beyond the Seas, tickled the king in the head with divers Spaniſh Jennets, of which, if his Majeſty would furniſh him with a certain ſum of money, he would not only furniſh his Stables, but his whole Country (in ſhort time) with their brood; and prevailed ſo far, that he had a thouſand pound paid him out of the Exchequer to that purpoſe, and ſo took his leave of the king: Some two months after, being to deliver up his Regiſter, his Majeſty found his own name lifted amongſt the reſt of the fools: at which being on the ſudden very angry, and aſked him why he durſt be ſo ſaucy, to rank him in the number of the others ridiculous for their folly? who anſwered him again: Marry Harry I do it not without good cauſe; for here came a ſtranger (no man knows from whence) into thy Court, and hath made thee believe he will bring thee horſes over; but when canſt thou tell? Now, waſt not thou a very fool to truſt a Traveller, who was neither known unto thee, nor unto any of thy Subjects, with ſo much

much money: to whom the king replied; Ey, but what wilt thou ſay, if he come over juſt at the day appointed, and bring me over ſo many Jennets as he promiſed? What will I ſay? (ſaith Will) marry I'le tell thee Harry, when I ſee this done, I will make no more ado, but fair and flatly quite race out thy name, and put in his; and then he, and not thee, ſhall ſtand a fool upon record.

In king Henry the Eighth's days, there was great poſting to and fro from Rome; for the Cardinal Wolſey had much buſineſs with the Pope: Now the Cardinal had a natural fool to make him merry, which was called Patch; which fool loved Will Summers exceedingly, as you may behold him ſaying, welcome Couz, welcome Couz: but Will Summers loved him only for his own ends; and being come to the Cardinal's houſe, Patch the Cardinal's fool, willing to give his Couzen Will entertainment at his Lord's houſe prevailed ſo far with him, as to have him to the Seller, which was the innermoſt, or private Seller, intending to drink ſome wine, and for further love and courtſie would broach a freſh Hogſhead of wine for his Couzen, and having pierced one or two Hogſheads, nothing came out, and yet was very heavy, went to another, and ſo try'd half a ſcore; at length Will Summers with a Hammer that lay by, ſtrikes the head of one of the Hogſheads out, and there

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there appeared nothing but Gold: Now Will Summers he ſaith nothing, but when he came to the Court, tells the king what a Seller of wine he had been in at the Cardinal's; and that his Seller yielded no ſuch wines, nor ere would: How, ſays the king, have not I no ſuch wines in my Seller? no indeed, ſaid Will, for there is never a Hogſhead in the Cardinal's Seller but is worth ten thouſand pounds, and better: Mother of God, ſays the king, that is ſuch wine that I never heard of; ten thouſand pounds a Hogſhead? nay, rather more than leſs: Come Sirrah, ſays the king, tell me your meaning, for I know there is ſomething elſe in it; tell me, or I will hang thee: then Will told the king how his Couſin Patch, the Cardinal's fool, brought him into his Seller to drink Wine, and broached two or three hogſheads, and no wine came forth; ſo at length he burſt open the head of one of the Hogſheads, and that was full of Gold, and ſo was the next to that, and forty more which he ſaw; whereupon the king having formerly taken a diſtaſte at the Cardinal, preſently ſends Meſſengers and other Officers to the Cardinal's Seller, and there finds 150 Hogſheads of good Gold, which was conveyed to the Exchequer, which money was welcome to the king, for at that time the king had great need of it: Now the Cardinal hearing of this ſad fortune, fell ſick at Aſher in Surrey, and makes

friends to the king to pacifie him, and withal he ſent Patch his fool to be his Servant; which Patch hearing, fell a crying, and would by no means have gone from him, till the Cardinal was forced to command ſix of his talleſt Yeomen to conduct him to the king, where they received him gladly: Then Will Summers ſhewed his new Couzen the Court, and divers other offices, which pleaſed Patch very well; and they both giving attendance.

The king at that time having an Embaſſie to ſend to Rome, aſked Will whether he had a mind to go on pilgrimage to Rome, as many of his Subjects frequently did? To whom he anſwered, that of all the places in the world he had no mind to travel thither: the king demanded his reaſon why? He made anſwer; marry Harry becauſe the old Proverb is newly come into mind, and that is this; The firſt time after that a man hath been at Rome, and returned from thence, he is thought to be a knave; the ſecond time he is proved to be a knave; but the third time he is known to be knave and an Impoſter.

Going over with the king to Bullein, he had complete armour made for him, from head to foot; which is to be ſeen within the Tower of London: And the weather being rough and tempeſtuous, he never having been on ſhipboard before, began to be very fearful of the Sea, and calling for a piece of the ſalteſt

Beef

Beef they had, began to eat it before the king very greedily; who aſking him, why he eat ſuch groſs powdred meat with ſuch an appetite, when there was ſuch ſtore of freſh victuals aboard? he made anſwer, O blame me not Harry to fill my ſtomack with ſo much ſalt meat before hand, knowing, if we be caſt away, what a deal of water I have to drink after it.

One thing I had forgot which he ſpake to the king at his firſt entertainment, but better inſerted out of courſe, than altogether omitted. His Majeſty after ſome diſcourſe growing into ſome good liking of him, ſaid; fellow, wilt thou be my fool? who anſwered him again, that he had rather be his own father's ſtill, then the king aſking him why? he told him again, that his father had got him a fool for himſelf, (having but one wife) and no body could juſtly claim him from him: now you have had ſo many wives, and ſtill living in hope to have more, why, of ſome one of them, cannot you get a fool as he did? and ſo you ſhall be ſure to have a fool of your own.

The king being in diſcourſe at Table with ſome of his Lords, held an argument, that of all his people in the kingdom: whether of the Nobility, Gentry, or City-Merchants, or Tradeſmen, of what faculty or condition ſoever, he thought the Ruſtick or Countrey-man to be the moſt even and plain dealing, as doing juſtly and alike to all: To whom Will Sum-

mers (then ſtanding by) ſaid, that he was not of his mind: Thy reaſon Will (ſaid the king) what be they that deal more fairly and proportionably? marry ſaith he your Bath or Hot-houſe keepers; for they to young and old, poor and rich, that come within their charge, give equal heat and warmth to all alike, without any difference or the leaſt partiality.

Upon a time Thieves breaking into his Chamber, and he perceiving them, call'd out unto them, and ſaid, I wonder my maſters, what you hope to find here in the dark night worth your ſeeking, when I can ſee nothing in the clear morning that is worth my keeping.

Another time lying in a Garden, he might perceive a fellow that had raiſed a long ladder as high as his window, and was ready to open the caſement, and come in; when he ſuddenly riſing, came to the window, and ſaid, my friend, thou comeſt too early, thy beſt way is to ſtay a little while, for I am not aſleep yet; which the Thief hearing, through fear let go his hold, and almoſt broke his neck down the Ladder.

Now Patch being at Court, every one had a great deſire to talk with him, and would oftentimes give him wine; and he loved ſweet wine exceedingly, and it was as natural to him as milk for a Calf; and having drank ſomewhat too much, that his ſtomack would not bear it, and fearing to be ſeen, leaſt he

ſhould

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ſhould have been whipt at the Porter's Lodge, the better to conceal this overſight, runs to a Cloſeſtool, and opening the top, puts in his head, becauſe he would not be heard to vomit; and when he had eaſed his ſtomack, he could not get his head out of the ſeat: ſo at length he cryed out, and no body heard him for the preſent, and he not able to endure the ſmell, ſtrived to pull his head out, which he could not do; but often forcing himſelf, at length pulled the ſtool out, which hung about his neck like a Band; which ſome eſpying brought him before the king, and told the ſtory, which made the king laugh heartily at his folly.

In the time of the Progreſs Will Summers being billeted in an Inne, the Hoſt of the Houſe took it as a great grace, that the king's fool, or Jeſter (whether you pleaſe to call him) would vouchſafe to take up his lodging in his houſe, and when Supper was brought up into the Chamber, the Hoſt thinking to cologue with him, (becauſe he had that time a ſuit at the Court, in which he thought he might do him ſome pleaſure) began to find fault with one thing firſt, and then with another, ſaying, the Trenchers were not well ſcrap'd, neither were the Napkins and Linnen white and clean enough for his Worſhip, and flung them down the ſtairs, and ſaid he would fetch better: whoſe back was no ſooner turned, but

Will

Will Summers took the meat that was in the Platters, Diſhes, Pots, Glaſſes, Stools, and all, and flung them down the ſtairs after him; at which the Hoſt coming up in a great rage, aſked him what in the Devil's name he meant by that? no hurt I aſſure you mine Hoſt, replied he: but I ſeeing you caſt down the Napkins and Trenchers before, I ſent the Meat and the Diſhes after, thinking your purpoſe was, we ſhould have ſupt below.

Will Summers at one time being angry with his Wife, and being come from Court ſomewhat early, and it being Summer-time, had in his houſe a very fine Cat, it being a Sun-ſhine day, the Cat plaid with her ſhadow, and then with her tail, running round about with her tail in her mouth, which Will Summers his Wife ſeeing, fell a laughing, he preſently takes the Cat and knocks out her brains; and being aſked the reaſon why he did ſo, made this anſwer, Becauſe his Wife ſhould not learn of her.

Will Summers, before he came to London, having gained a good report, and being well beloved amongſt Gentlemen for his merry conceits, uſed to come to the Town every Tueſday, it being a Market-day, and divers Gentlemen meeting together that day at an Ordinary, which was conſtantly kept there; Will Summers coming in, and hearing that the Hoſteſs of the houſe had a kinſwoman, which was held for a very

very witty laſs, and ſhe likewiſe having a good opinion of her own Mother wit; for her tongue was like a Clock, always wagging, and ſhe hearing that Will Summers was ſuch a notable witty conceited fellow, took time and opportunity to let him underſtand, that ſhe had as much in her head as ever was in her Grand-father's; yet in ſome things ſhe differed from the women in thoſe days, for their natural complexion was their beauty: now this Butterfly, what ſhe wanted by nature, ſhe doth repleniſh by art, as her boxes of her white and red daily can teſtifie. But to come to the purpoſe, Will Summers being come into the Ordinary amongſt the Gentlemen, throws by his Chat, ſalutes the Gentlemen, and deſires the Drawer to bring up a pint of the blew Charnicko. Now Will Summers had a pair of hoſe on, that for ſome offence durſt not be ſeen in that hue that they were firſt dy'd in, for they had changed their colour very much, and in that manner, that the one part ſeemed blew, the other green: The Wench told him, that his breeches being of ſo many colours, well ſuited with his condition: and for the antiquity of them, that they might not be forgotten, wiſhed him to let them be put in print, and ſhe would bear the charges: At which words the company laughed and jeered at Will Summers: and he being much moved in his mind, that his hoſe were now called in queſtion,

queſtion, and before his friends, and by a Maid too, anſwered, By my faith Miſtreſs, ſaid Will Summers, thy face is moſt damnable ill painted. How mean you good Will Winter, ſaid ſhe? Marry thus, my Bartholmew fair Baby, that it were not for printing and painting, my Arſe would be forgotten, and thy face would want reparations. At which words, ſhe knowing herſelf guilty bit her lip, and in a parret fury went down the ſtairs very haſtily. The Gentlemen laughed at the ſudden anſwer of Will Summers: and now being dinner-time, and the Meat upon the Table, the Gentlemen would needs have the company of this witty Gentlwoman to dine with them; who being earneſtly entreated came up, hoping ere dinner was done, to cry quittance with her friend William: and when they had placed her, they would needs have Will Summers ſit next to her, becauſe they did imagine they would have a fling one at another. Will Summers kindly entertains her; and being ſat together, and ſometime ſpent in eating and drinking, Will Summers having a mind to put a trick upon her, deſired her to reach him the Capon that ſtood a little off her, and as ſhe roſe up, and putting out her arm and body to reach the diſh, Will Summers ſitting next to her, yerks out a huge fart, which made all the company in a maze, one looking upon the other, yet they knew it came that way. Peace, Gentlemen,

tlemen, ſaid Will Summers, and whiſpered her in the ear, I will ſay it was I. All the company fell into a huge laughter, ſhe into a fretting fury, vowing ſhe ſhould never ſleep quietly till ſhe was revenged of her Country-man Will, and ſo in a great chafe ſhe left their company.

Will Summers keeping his Father's Sheep in the Country, did uſe to carry a pair of Cards in his pocket, and meeting with boyes as good as himſelf, would fall to Cards at the Cambrian Game of Whip-her-ginny, or Engliſh one and thirty; at which ſport he would ſome dayes loſe a ſheep or two: for which, if his Father corrected him, he (in revenge) would drive the ſheep home at night over a narrow bridge, where ſome of them falling beſides the bridge, were drowned in the ſwift brook. The old man, his Father, being wearied with his ungracious dealing, complained to a Juſtice, thinking to afright him from doing any more the like. In brief, before the Juſtice Will Summers was brought, where (uſing ſmall reverence, and leſs manners) the Juſtice ſaid to him, Sirrah, you are a notable villain, you play at Cards, and loſe your Father's ſheep at one and thirty. Will Summers replyed, that it was a lye: A lye quoth the Juſtice, you ſaucy knave, doſt thou give me the lye? No, quoth Will Summers, I gave not you the lye, but you told me the lye, for I never loſt ſheep

at one and thirty; for when my game was one and thirty I always won. Indeed ſaid the Juſtice, thou ſayſt true: but I have another accuſation againſt thee, which is, that you drive your Father's ſheep over a narrow bridge, where ſome of them are oftentimes drowned: That's a lye too, quoth Will Summers, for thoſe that go over the bridge are well enough, it's onely thoſe that fall beſide, which are drowned: whereto the Juſtice ſaid to Will Summers' Father, Old man, thou haſt brought in two falſe accuſations againſt thy Son, for he never loſt ſheep at one and thirty, nor were there ever any drowned that went over the bridge.

Upon a time Will Summers ſeeing a decayed Gentleman in a very thred-bare Cloak, ſaid to him, Sir, you have a very watchful Cloak on? Why, ſaid the poor Gentleman? the other anſwered, I do not think it had a good nap theſe ſeven years: the Gentleman replyed, and truly Sir me thinks you want a nap as well as my Cloak, for you talk idly for want of ſleep.

Upon a feſtival day Will Summers began to have a vein of mirth, and being in the Court-yard walking with divers Gentlemen, he eſpyed a little Gentleman, being of a very low ſtature, and wore a broad rim'd Hat, which he preſently tells to one of his friends, ſaying, if that Gentleman had but ſuch another

ther Hat at his feet, he might be ſerved up to the King's Table as between two diſhes.

The King took great delight in Will Summers, for he could make ſuch antick faces, and ſo change his countenance as he lifted; for when at any time the King was ſet at dinner, Will Summers would but put in his head and face between the hangings in ſuch a manner, that it would make the King laugh heartily, and then he would come up to the King's Table in ſuch a rolling and innocent poſture, in holding his hands, and ſetting his eyes, that it is paſt deſcribing, unleſs one ſaw them.

Infinite were the Jeſts and witty anſwers of this Will Summers, which would aſk a longer Relation chan this Tractate well affords, ſparing the reſt for a ſecond part, if this former be by the courteous reader well accepted, concluding with that which he ſpake upon his death-bed.

When he lay drawing near unto his end, a Fryer, who was his Ghoſtly Father, coming to confeſs him of his ſins, he began to examine what eſtate he had in poſſeſſion, and to whom his purpoſe was to leave it? To whom he made anſwer, that he had a matter of ſome five hundred pound, which he had gotten by favour of the King, and that he meant to leave unto the Prince of the world. The covetous Fryer thinking to have perſwaded him to have left it unto their

Convent, began to grow very angry, and ſaid, and why doeſt thou not rather conferre it upon us who are Mendicants, and needy? To whom he again replyed, becauſe I mean to die in your Doctrine: for you teach us, that all the goods and wealth of this earth belong to the Prince and Princes of this world, and therefore, this my Action ſhall be according unto your inſtruction.

An

An Epitaph upon the Death of Will Summers, Fool or Jeſter to King Henry the Eighth.

STAY, Traveller, gueſs who lies here;
I tell thee, neither Lord nor Peer:
No Knight, no Gentleman of note,
That boaſts him of his ancient Coat,
Which Heralds curiouſly emblazon,
For men (well ſkill'd therein) to gaze on:
Know then, that this was no ſuch man,
And I'le expreſs him as I can.

He that beneath this Tomb-ſtone lies,
Some call'd a fool, ſome held him wiſe:
For which, who better proof can bring;
Than to be favour'd by a King;
And yet again we may miſ-doubt him,
" A King hath always fools about him."
Is he more Ideot than the reſt,
Who in a guarded Coat can jeaſt?
Or can he wiſdom's honour gain,
That is all bravery, and no brain?
Sure no ſuch things, wit truly bred,
I'th' habit lies not, but the head.
But whether he was fool or knave,
He now lies ſleeping in his grave;

Who never in his life found match,
Unleſs the Card'nal's fool call'd Patch:
Of whom, ſome Courtiers, who did ſee
Them two alone, might ſay, We three:
And 't may be fear'd, it is a phraſe
That may be us'd ſtill in theſe days.
Well more of him what ſhould I ſay?
Both fools and wiſe men turn to clay:
And this is all we have to truſt,
That there's no difference in their duſt.
Reſt quiet then beneath this ſtone,
To whom late Archer* was a drone.

Stultorum plena ſunt omnia.

* Archibald Armſtrong, commonly called Archer, was the laſt perſon retained as King's Jeſter; and was diſcharged from that office by Charles I. for an impudent jeſt on Archbiſhop Laud.

FINIS.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

MUSEUM
BRITAN
NICUM